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Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in resolution adopted on Saturday, condemns recent Iraqi military deployment towards Kuwaiti border; demands that Iraq immediately complete its withdrawal and refrain from threatening its neighbours.

+ Russian Foreign Minister says Iraq has agreed to need to recognize Kuwaiti sovereignty without preconditions; United States says crisis is not over.

+ Security Council welcomes return of President Aristide to Haiti and subsequent lifting of sanctions against country; envisages rapid return of International Civilian Mission.

+ Secretary-General says return of President Aristide and resumption of democratic process herald new era for Haitian people; pledges United Nations support in meeting future challenges.

+ Secretary-General recommends that Security Council extend UNOSOM II mandate until 31 March 1995; Special Representative for Somalia to continue efforts to aid reconciliation.

+ Secretary-General, in World Food Day address, says problems of hunger and malnutrition are of increasing global concern; food security is part of sustainable development challenge.

+ General Assembly President says goal of International Day for Eradication of Poverty is achievable, not utopian.

+ Secretary-General tells First Committee that divisions must not be allowed to stifle progress in arms control and disarmament.

+ UNCTAD holds International Symposium on Trade and Efficiency in Columbus, Ohio; seeks to reduce trade costs by up to $100 billion annually.

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+ General Assembly authorizes Secretary-General to commit $5.6 million for operation of ONUSAL up to 30 November; concludes debate on Security Council reform.

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The Security Council has condemned Iraq's recent military deployments towards the border with Kuwait, and demanded that it immediately complete the withdrawal of all units to their original positions. The Council also demanded that Iraq not redeploy those units to the south or take any other action to enhance its military capacity in southern Iraq. The Council took that action on Saturday night by unanimously adopting resolution 949 (1994) under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

The Council demanded that Iraq refrain from using its forces in a hostile or provocative manner to threaten either its neighbours or United Nations operations in the country. It further demanded that Iraq cooperate fully with the United Nations Special Commission. The Council underlined that it would consider Iraq fully responsible for the serious consequences of any failure to fulfil the demands in the resolution.

The Council welcomed all diplomatic and other efforts to resolve the crisis and noted that Iraq had confirmed its readiness to resolve the issue of recognizing Kuwait's sovereignty and its borders as endorsed by resolution 833 (1993). The Council underlined that Iraq must unequivocally commit itself, by full and formal constitutional procedures, to respect Kuwait's sovereignty, territorial integrity and borders.

United States representative Madeleine Albright warned that her country would take appropriate action if Iraq failed to comply with its obligations. Russian representative Vasiliy Sidorov said that following the emergency visit by his Foreign Minister to the region, Iraq had affirmed its intention to recognize the sovereignty of Kuwait. He appreciated that the resolution had been amended to reflect that effort to resolve the crisis.

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Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev today said that Iraq had for the first time agreed to the need to recognize the sovereignty of Kuwait without preconditions. He said the Security Council should be ready to lift the sanctions against Iraq if it complied with all Council demands. Mr. Kozyrev was reporting on his recent meeting with President Saddam Hussein, as the Council discussed the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. He went on to say that some Council members had made hasty judgements and misguided assessments, possibly because of the intensity of the crisis.

United States representative Madeleine Albright said that Iraq had threatened Kuwait, and that the crisis was not over despite signs of an Iraqi withdrawal from the border. The United States placed little value on Iraq's promise to recognize Kuwait. Kuwait must be recognized through formal constitutional procedures. The renunciation of Iraq's claim to Kuwait must be

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made by the Revolutionary Command Council and published in Iraq's Government gazette. Iraq should not be rewarded for partial cooperation with a lifting of some sanctions. It must satisfy the Council of its peaceful intentions before being accepted as a normal member of the international community.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Tariq Aziz, said Iraqi forces had never left Iraqi soil during the recent clamour. Meanwhile, his country had been cooperating with the United Nations Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

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In another resolution adopted on Saturday, the Security Council welcomed the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Haiti and the fact that sanctions against the country would be lifted at 0001 a.m. EST the next day. The Council expressed confidence that Haitians could now begin to rebuild their country with dignity and consolidate democracy in a spirit of national reconciliation. It particularly welcomed the fact that, with the convening of the Haitian Parliament and the departure of the military leadership, the implementation of the Governors Island Agreement, the New York Pact and United Nations objectives was under way. Resolution 948 (1994) was adopted by 14 votes in favour to none against, with one abstention (Brazil).

The Council expressed full support for the efforts of the legitimate Government to bring Haiti out of crisis and return it to the democratic community of nations. Commending the contributions of all States, organizations and individuals to that outcome, it recognized in particular the efforts of the multinational force in creating the conditions necessary for the return of democracy. The Council supported the deployment of the advance team of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) and urged that cooperation continue between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), especially regarding the rapid return of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH).

Haitian representative Fritz Longchamp thanked the international community for aiding the return of President Aristide, and appealed for assistance to rebuild his country. Brazil's representative, Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg, said that as his Government had abstained from voting on resolution 940 (1994) over concerns relating to the deployment of the multinational force in Haiti, he could not retroactively endorse that mission by voting in favour of resolution 948.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has welcomed the return of President Jean-Betrand Aristide to Haiti and the resumption of the democratic process in that country. In a statement issued on Saturday, he said a new era had begun for the Haitian people who, with the assistance of the international community, would now be able to rebuild their country on the solid foundations of reconciliation, freedom and human rights. The United Nations stood ready to help them meet the challenges of the future, he stressed.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) be extended until 31 March 1995. In a report on the situation in Somalia dated 14 October, he said the five-month extension would give Somali leaders time to consolidate any progress towards reconciliation. He noted that the Security Council had decided that the Operation should end next March, and said that the withdrawal of all personnel might take as long as 120 days and require extensive air and sea support from Member States.

The Secretary-General said he had instructed his Special Representative to continue to help Somali leaders achieve reconciliation, at least to the extent of agreeing to establish a transitional government. In the event that progress could be made in that direction, he would not hesitate to recommend the continuation of some United Nations presence in Somalia beyond March if that were justified by the overriding objective of restoring effective government.

It would be vital to maintain unified command and control if the withdrawal of UNOSOM II had to be carried out in hostile circumstances, the Secretary-General continued. Any unilateral attempts by States to withdraw their contingents could worsen the situation. He went on to say that the United Nations and the international community could continue to play a role in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Somalia if the country's leaders could create and maintain favourable security conditions.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today said that the problems of hunger and malnutrition were of increasing global concern. In an address marking World Food Day, he pointed out that more than 1.2 billion people -- mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia -- lived in abject poverty, and that two thirds of them were undernourished. Achieving food security would require an ever-widening cooperative effort. It was one dimension of the greatest global challenge -- the challenge of development.

The Secretary-General noted that the theme for World Food Day this year, "Water for Life", highlighted the links between food security and sustainable development. World water resources could probably meet the needs of the world population, but unequal distribution of rainfall, pollution and land degradation had resulted in unequal distribution of freshwater supplies, and led to scarcity in many poor countries. He called on the international community to make the management and protection of water resources an integral part of efforts to achieve sustainable development.

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The President of the General Assembly, Amara Essy (Côte d'Ivoire), today said that the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty marked the world community's growing commitment to fight against poverty and the damage

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it inflicted on the human body and spirit. That commitment was also reflected in the declaration of 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and the convening, in March 1995, of the World Summit for Social Development, with the reduction and eradication of poverty as a central theme.

"To speak of the eradication of poverty may seem utopian, but we should aim at nothing less", he said. The world had sufficient resources to feed, clothe and house its population. Some societies had provided universal access to basic education and health care, and some had eradicated mass poverty. The task was therefore not impossible.

The first requirement for the fight against poverty was knowledge and understanding, he continued. We must educate ourselves and our communities concerning the extent and nature of poverty, its causes and consequences, and the strategies and actions that could reduce it. Secondly, we must give priority to the struggle against poverty in the least developed countries, particularly in Africa. Those countries could not overcome poverty without economic and social development at the national and community levels. The international community and the United Nations had a responsibility to assist them by providing access to markets, knowledge, technology and resources.

Thirdly, he went on to say, we must improve opportunities for women and children, who bore most of the burdens of poverty. Finally, the international community must exchange information on the global effort to eradicate poverty. While many actions to reduce poverty were essential, those four elements could form the basis of an effective international strategy.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today told the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) that divisions -- however real -- must not be allowed to stifle progress in arms control and disarmament. Such progress made the world more secure, and freed up economic, scientific and technological resources for peaceful ends. Arms control and disarmament agreements could also help prevent conflicts, and play an important role in peace-keeping and peacemaking.

The Secretary-General said he looked forward to the early entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Along with the Biological Weapons Convention and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it would complete the triad of global Treaties on weapons of mass destruction. He called on Member States to support the indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT at the Renewal Conference in 1995. The early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty was fundamental to real progress in nuclear disarmament and to the security of non-nuclear weapon States. A treaty banning the further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices was also needed.

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The Secretary-General highlighted the need for a binding global agreement on security assurances. Non-nuclear weapon States wanted such assurances, and the nuclear-weapon States must make positive moves towards a binding, global agreement on the issue. All those efforts formed a global web of protection against weapons of mass destruction, and required the full commitment and practical participation of all Member States.

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The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is holding an International Symposium on Trade and Efficiency in Columbus, Ohio, this week. Some 90 trade ministers and thousands of other delegates from the public and private sectors worldwide will discuss proposals to improve efficiency in international trade which could reduce transaction costs by up to $100 billion annually by the year 2000.

The ministerial segment of the Symposium, from 19 to 21 October, will be officially opened by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The ministers are expected to adopt the "Columbus Declaration on Trade Efficiency", as well as a set of practical recommendations for immediate action in six key sectors: transport, trade information, telecommunications, business practices, customs and financial services. Those texts will constitute a blue print for international trade in the next century.

The five-day Symposium will also launch the Global Trade Point Network. By electronically connecting trade points worldwide, the network will become a major factor in the field of trade information and electronic trading.

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The General Assembly concluded its debate on reform of the Security Council on Friday, having heard various suggestions for expanding the membership. The Russian Federation supported a limited enlargement up to 20 members and preservation of the status of permanent members. The United Kingdom said any enlargement should be limited to 19 or 20 members, so that the Council's effectiveness would not be jeopardized. Certain countries, by virtue of their global interests and their contribution to international security and United Nations operations, should have permanent membership. The United Kingdom supported such membership for Japan and Germany.

Belarus said that if candidates for permanent membership assumed a greater share of the financial burden, consensus could be achieved more rapidly on the criteria for selection. The next step in increasing Council membership should be the creation of one additional non-permanent seat for each of the five regional groups. Zimbabwe said that as the goal of abolishing permanent membership and the veto might be a long way off, any transitional agreements must address the imbalances and injustices of existing arrangements. While the veto lasted, it should not be allowed to be used to promote or protect narrow national interests.

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Also on Friday, the Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to commit $5.6 million gross ($5 million net) for the operation of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) for the period ending on 30 November. It expressed concern about the lack of reporting on the Mission's performance since 1 December 1993, and asked the Secretary-General to submit a report for the period from 1 December 1993 to 31 May 1994. The Assembly took that action by adopting, without a vote, a draft decision approved by its Fifth Committee.

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